

they confuse its standards and codes, and they corrupt its tastes. They set fashions in literature which the writers of the second class imitate. In general, they relax the inhibitions which have come down to us in our mores without giving by suggestion an independence of character which would replace the traditions by sound judgments. Their influence will be greater when it has been diluted so as to reach the great mass. It hardly can be worse than that of the literature which is now used by that class.

199. Illustrations. In the later days of Greece the study of Homer became an affectation. Dio Chrysostom tells of a visit he made to a colony on the Borysthenes, in which nearly all could read the *Iliad* and heard it more willingly than anything else.<sup>1</sup> The Athenians, especially the gilded youth, affected Spartan manners and ways. The dandies went about with uncut hair, unwashed hands, and they practiced fist-fights. They were as proud of torn ears as German students are of cuts on their faces.<sup>2</sup> The religious and social reforms of Augustus were a pose. They lacked sincerity and were adopted for a political purpose. Men took them up who did not conform their own conduct to them. Hence a "general social falsehood" was the result.<sup>3</sup> In the fourth and fifth centuries all the well-to-do classes spent their time in making imitations of the ancient literature and philosophy. They tried to imitate Seneca and Pliny, writing compositions and letters, and pursuing a mode of life which they supposed the men of the period of glory had lived.<sup>4</sup> The French of the fifteenth century had the greatest fear of ridicule; the Italians feared most that they might appear to be simpletons.<sup>5</sup> In the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries the "chevaliers transis" wore furs in summer and summer mantles in winter. They meant to prove that "love suffices for everything."<sup>6</sup> Old pictures of the sixteenth century show that it was considered modest to squint. A Spaniard thought

<sup>1</sup> *Orat.*, XXXVI.

<sup>2</sup> Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.*, II, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Boissier, *Relig. Rom.*, I, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Dill, *Last Century of the Western Empire*.

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius, *Lucret. Borgia*, 99.

<sup>6</sup> De Maulde la Clavière, *Les Femmes de la Renaissance*, 457.